

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-07

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C O N F I D E N T I A L TEHRAN 7613

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT PGOV IR
SUBJ: POTENTIAL STUDENT UNREST

1. ACTING CHIEF OF IRANIAN NATIONAL POLICE JA'AFARI TOLD DCM AT A CHANCE MEETING EVENING OF AUG 24 OF HIS GROWING CONCERN ABOUT POSSIBLE CONSEQUENCES OF THE RELEASE OF POLITICAL PRISONERS. HE SAID THAT A NUMBER OF YOUNG TERRORISTS WHO HAD CLOSE TIES WITH STUDENTS WERE AMONG THEM AND THAT THERE WOULD BE ADDITIONAL RELEASE OF ABOUT 400 ON THE OCCASION OF THE SHAH'S BIRTHDAY OCT 26. THESE RELEASES PUT A POTENT FORCE OF POTENTIAL TROUBLE-MAKERS BACK ON THE STREETS AND JA'AFARI FELT THAT GIVEN THEIR TIES WITH UNIV STUDENTS THERE WAS A PREGNANT POSSIBILITY THAT WHEN THE FALL SCHOOL TERM OPENED SEPT 24 SERIOUS TROUBLE COULD FOLLOW. INDEED, HE FELT THAT THE UNIV SCENE AND STUDENT ACTIVITY MAY WELL PROVE TO BE THE FIRST MAJOR TEST OF THE AMOUZEGA CABINET HE WAS NOT SANGUINE ABOUT THE OUTCOME BECAUSE HE FELT THAT THE MINISTER OF EDUCATION GANJI WAS NOT WELL QUALIFIED TO DEAL WITH THIS KIND OF TROUBLE. IN JA'AFARI'S OPINION GANJI HELD NEITHER THE KIND OF RESPECT OR THE TRUST OF THE ACADEMIC COMMUNITY OR THE STUDENTS WHICH WAS ESSENTIAL TO NIPPING POTENTIAL DISTURBANCES IN THE CAMPUS IN THE BUD.

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2. JA'AFARI SAID THAT HE HAD A WELL TRAINED FORCE WHICH AMOUNTED TO ABOUT 2 DIVISIONS PREPARED FOR POSSIBLE TROUBLE. MANY IN THIS FORCE WERE YOUNGER AND BETTER EDUCATED THAN IN THE PAST, HOWEVER, AND HE WAS NOT AT ALL CERTAIN THAT THEY WOULD BE PREPARED TO FIRE ON THE STUDENTS IF THINGS GOT OUT OF HAND. (JA'AFARI IS A FORMER SAVAK COLONEL AND TOUGH LAW AND ORDER MAN). HE FELT THAT IF STUDENT DISTURBANCES

COULD BE CONFINED TO THE CAMPUS THE CHANCES OF CONTAINING THE SITUATION WERE REASONABLY GOOD. HE WAS A GREAT LESS SANGUINE ABOUT THE OUTCOME IF THEY BROKE OUT INTO THE STREETS.

3. COMING FROM SOMEONE WHO IS NORMALLY CONFIDENT AND OPTIMISTIC, JA'AFARI'S FOREBODING SUGGESTS A MORE TROUBLED FUTURE THAN WE HAVE SEEN IN THE RECENT PAST. BY AND LARGE THE UNIV SCENE DURING THE LAST SCHOOL YEAR WAS RELATIVELY QUIESCENT AND LOCAL AUTHORITIES HAVE GROWN MORE SOPHISTICATED IN DEALING WITH THOSE DISTURBANCES THAT HAVE OCCURRED. WHETHER WE WIL WITNESS A RETURN TO VIOLENT CONFRONTATION AND CONCOMITANT OVER-REACTION BY THE POLICE REMAINS TO BE SEEN BUT JA'AFARI'S ANALYSIS DOES NOT PRESENT A HAPPY PROSPECT. AN EARLIER REPORT OF JA-AFARI'S VIES ALONG FOREGOING LINES HAS BEEN SENT IN A SEPARATE CHANNEL. SULLIVAN

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